

From: Bausch, Carl <FTA>
To: VanWyk, Christopher <FTA>
Sent: 10/30/2008 3:40:05 AM
Subject: RE: Honolulu TV - Feds Approve Rail Draft E.I.S.; City Not Releasing It Yet

Redacted

From: VanWyk, Christopher <FTA>
Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2008 9:35 AM
To: Bausch, Carl <FTA>
Cc: Marler, Renee <FTA>
Subject: RE: Honolulu TV - Feds Approve Rail Draft E.I.S.; City Not Releasing It Yet

Redacted

From: Bausch, Carl <FTA>
Sent: Thu 10/30/2008 9:32 AM
To: VanWyk, Christopher <FTA>
Subject: FW: Honolulu TV - Feds Approve Rail Draft E.I.S.; City Not Releasing It Yet

Redacted

From: Longo, David <FTA>
Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2008 9:11 AM
To: Simpson, James <FTA>; Little, Sherry <FTA>; Miller, Severn <FTA>; Irvin, Wes <FTA>
Cc: Biehl, Scott <FTA>; Borinsky, Susan <FTA>; Bausch, Carl <FTA>; Carranza, Edward <FTA>; Rogers, Leslie <FTA>; List-FTA-TCA
Subject: Honolulu TV - Feds Approve Rail Draft E.I.S.; City Not Releasing It Yet

Feds Approve Rail Draft E.I.S.; City Not Releasing It Yet

By Gina Mangieri

With a vote on a rail transit system just 6 days away, the City and County of Honolulu has received federal approval of its draft environmental impact statement for the multibillion dollar project.

But the document is not yet being made available to the public.

The Federal Transit Administration gave KHON2 and the city indications that the approval would be coming this week, but city officials are still working out how they'll share its findings with the public.

The draft E.I.S. for rail contains information voters want to know beyond just the environment, like what properties would have to make way for the train, and any revisions to the multibillion-dollar pricetag.

"The \$3.6 billion figure was valid when the council voted on it 2006," said Honolulu City Councilmember Charles Djou. "Those numbers obviously changed."

"One of the things they do review is our cost estimates one of the things they said last time they were here is our cost estimates were high," said city transportation director Wayne Yoshioka, referring to consultants reviewing the project quarterly on the FTA's behalf.

The FTA told KHON2 that upon federal approval, the draft EIS is supposed to be considered a public document immediately. The city says it's more complex than that.

"Permission to release means that they have to pull together the various chapters and assemble the document," Yoshioka said, "make sure that the quality control is all set and everything is ready to go."

Upon learning late Wednesday afternoon that the FTA had signaled approval before midday – at 11 a.m. – councilmember and mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi sent the administration a written request for an immediate copy of the EIS to be provided to the city council.

The draft EIS release also came up during a council hearing on the transit tax that started at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday.

"As soon as you get it will you make it available to the city council within lets say hours, not days later?" Djou asked Yoshioka. "Eill you make every effort to release it before the election?" Djou added.

"The election has nothing to do with it," Yoshioka responded. "What determines when we release it is when I get the word from RTD [city transit officials working on the project] that the document is ready for release."

"We will make every effort to release it as soon as we can," Yoshioka added.

Rail critics say the draft EIS should have been to public hearing by now based on the city's own timeline posted at www.honolulutransit.org, and that having to review this close to the election puts undue onus on voters.

"The EIS was supposed to be here in the spring or summer, so we need a reasonable amount of time," said rail critic Panos Prevedorous. Supporters say the EIS will provide more reasons to vote in favor of rail.

"I think the EIS is going to show it's a well thought out project that's going to make a huge difference for years to come," said Rep. Kirk Caldwell, a rail supporter.

Yoshioka told KHON2 he'll be meeting with his transit project officials Thursday morning to look at how to expedite sharing the massive document, though they're not yet committing to a date for release.

He says one of the options is possibly posting it onto the project's web site.

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